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## THE HISTORY OF GERMAN SOCIALISM RECONSIDERED

IN 1848 Marx and Engels published the Communist Manifesto, that "birth-cry of modern Socialism" which, by its strident appeals to the demons of Revolution and proletarian Internationalism, was well calculated to affright divine-right monarchs and to terrify all respectable well-to-do bourgeois. "You have nothing to lose but your chains", cried the prophets of the new and awful dispensation: "you have a world to win; workingmen of *all* countries, *unite!*" In 1914 the German disciples of the Communist gospel, more numerous by far than their comrades in any other country, stood staunchly loyal to Kaiser as well as to Fatherland, and voted taxes and gave their lives, seemingly in perfect concord with the titled nobility and the wealthy middle class, in order that victory in a huge world-war should be wrested by Germans from other nationalities, even from the workingmen of other nationalities; of internationalism, so emphasized in 1848, they now said little, and of revolution, revolt, or rebellion, they breathed not a word. Yet the attitude of the German Social Democrats in 1914, far from being determined on the spur of the moment by frenzy or absence of thought, was in fact conditioned quite rationally by certain developments in the evolution of German Socialism since 1848. It is the intent of this paper to reconsider the history of the German Social Democratic movement in a new light, in the light of the present world-conflagration, and to present certain facts which, although they have escaped popular attention, may afford an illuminating commentary on the gradual elimination of the tactics and policies that in an earlier day had made German Social Democracy feared and hated and thoroughly disreputable.<sup>1</sup>

It is not without significance that organized Socialism in Germany is hardly older than the ministry of Bismarck. It stepped into the political arena at a time when violent revolutionary republicanism had been discredited and when the ablest and most forceful Prussian Junker was already in the saddle with his baggage of a more or less benevolent Hohenzollern paternalism. There was no

<sup>1</sup> Of the standard histories of the German Social Democracy, the best are Franz Mehring's *Geschichte der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie* (1897-1898, 2 vols.), and Edgard Milhaud's *La Démocratie Socialiste Allemande* (1903).

tradition in Germany of successful revolution, such as had been firmly established in France by the events of 1789, 1830, and 1848. From its first formal appearance, German Socialism was less revolutionary than evolutionary.

At first glance the happenings of 1848 might seem to disprove this thesis. Was not the revolutionary movement of 1848 attended in Germany by a lively agitation among the working classes? Were not the *Bund der Gerechten* and the *Arbeiterverbrüderung* true precursors of Socialism? Upon closer scrutiny, however, the revolution of 1848 reveals itself as an essentially middle-class uprising, in which outbreaks of violence among the workingmen for the most part bore a closer resemblance to riots than to organized revolution. Germany in 1848, let it ever be remembered, was even more unripe for a Socialist revolution than for a democratic and national one. Industrial development, the spread of the factory system and the growth of cities—the very stuff from which Marxian socialism has always been fashioned—was much more backward in Germany than in England or in France; urban wage-earners were relatively few and impotent. What workers there were, moreover, were imbued with the petty bourgeois spirit and, worse still from the standpoint of revolution, to some extent actually with the spirit of the medieval guilds.

Only a comparatively small minority of the German workers had grasped the revolutionary mission of the working class. If they everywhere fought in the front rank of the advanced parties; if, wherever they could, they tried to urge on the middle-class democracy, they paid the cost of all this in their own person. The Communists of 1848 fell on the barricades, on the battle-field of Baden; they filled the prisons, or they were obliged, when the reaction triumphed all along the line, to go into exile, where a large number of them died in misery.<sup>2</sup>

Great economic prosperity in 1850 not only bolstered up the tottering thrones of central Europe but also snuffed out the last flickering flames of the workingmen's agitation of the period. The governments soon felt themselves strong enough to dissolve all revolutionary organizations, and, on the motion of Prussia and Austria, the Bundestag in 1854 decreed that all the federated states must suppress every workingmen's society or fraternity which pursued political, socialist, or communist ends. Not only did the revolutionary movement of 1848-1849 mean for German Socialists the loss of their leaders and the dissolution of their organizations, but it likewise left in their minds an ineradicable distrust of violence as a means of realizing their ends. Marx and Engels perceived

<sup>2</sup> Bernstein, *Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer* (1893), pp. 4-5.

the signs of the new era and on the eve of their expulsion from Germany published a gloss on their gospel of 1848, a gloss to which their German disciples attached, as time went on, an ever greater reverence and authority.

In the universal prosperity of the present time [wrote Marx and Engels in 1850], when the productive forces of bourgeois society are developing as luxuriantly as is possible under bourgeois conditions, *there can be no question of an effective revolution*. Such a revolution is possible only in periods when the two factors of modern productive force and bourgeois productive methods are in conflict with each other.<sup>3</sup>

In the Karl Marx of 1850 is an almost pessimistic fatalism in sharp contrast to the romantic enthusiasm of a Ledru-Rollin, a Mazzini, or a Kossuth.

When, more than a decade later, almost synchronizing with the advent of Bismarck to power in Prussia, the workingmen's agitation was resumed, the chief legacy of reborn German Socialism from the days of 1848-1849 was a horror of violence. No more incitements to immediate revolution came from the people's apostles. The foremost leaders had, temporarily at least, turned from dangerous propaganda to scholarly exegesis. Marx published his *Critique of Political Economy* in 1859 and forthwith set to work on his masterpiece *Das Capital*; Lassalle's *System of Acquired Rights* appeared in 1861. In the meantime, the middle-class German liberals were rapidly substituting England for France as the model for their programme and their methods. The *Fortschrittspartei*, organized in June, 1861, soon comprised the bulk of Prussian liberals under the leadership of such men as Karl Twesten, Eduard Lasker, and Rudolf Virchow; and when, in the elections of November, 1861, the new party gained complete control of the House of Representatives, a most gracious springtime for the people seemed close at hand; as Bernstein has remarked, "it promised the rose without the thorns". Everything would now come off in the most approved parliamentary style. The party of progress would utilize the pending questions of military reform and the budget in order to compel the government both to accept the doctrine of ministerial responsibility and to respect the constitutional guarantees of personal liberties. Should the government oppose the lawfully-elected deputies, then the Progressive majority would hold up supplies until such time as the government would be disgraced and obliged to retire. But above all, no violence! Only a quiet, pacifistic, idyllic parliamentary pressure!

<sup>3</sup> "Revue von Mai bis Oktober 1850", *Neue Rheinische Zeitung*, V. and VI. 153 (1850). Quoted by Engels in his introduction to *Enthüllungen über den Kommunisten-Prozess zu Köln* (1885), p. 15.

Besides, the Progressives in their sympathetic study of English institutions and precedents had hit upon a happily peaceful way of solving the social and economic problems of the day. If they could consecrate Prussia to "liberty"—liberty of trade, liberty of contract, liberty of association, liberty of education, liberty of self-help—they would wean the workingmen from socialistic Utopias and win them to a proper respect for law and order and individual rights, not the least of which was the right of private property. Like their English contemporaries, these Prussian liberals were not simon-pure democrats: as well-to-do middle-class people, they themselves were entrenched in the three-class electoral system of their country and could see no good reason for introducing a universal manhood suffrage which might imperil their majority in the House of Representatives and endanger glorious "liberty", especially since the workingmen, to enjoy the blessings of this liberty, had no need of the ballot. The workers had no need of direct parliamentary representation; the Progressives were their benevolent if self-constituted champions. When a group of workers humbly petitioned for full membership in the party, the magnanimous but hardly satisfactory reply was vouchsafed that "all workers might consider *honorary* membership as their birthright".

The magnanimity of the liberal leaders was not convincing to all the workers. There were some who suspected that "liberty" of the middle-class variety might not prove a panacea for long hours, small wages, and miserable factory and tenement conditions. It was before a group of these doubters and upon their invitation that Ferdinand Lassalle in 1862 delivered his lectures on the "Workers' Programme" (*Arbeiterprogramm*) and "What now?" (*Was nun?*). He confirmed their suspicions and strengthened their doubts. And thenceforth the issue was squarely joined between the middle-class Progressives and the Socialist followers of Lassalle.

Lassalle's following was never numerous. Although he was a brilliant speaker and writer, fired with the most ardent enthusiasm, tireless in travel and propaganda, and possessed in no small degree of organizing ability, he was unable to awaken the bulk of the German working class to any appreciation of the rôle which it might conceivably play in the national, political, and social life of Germany; and *Der Allgemeine Deutsche Arbeiterverein*, which Lassalle formed in 1863 and over which he exercised practically dictatorial powers, numbered at his death on August 31, 1864, fewer than five thousand adherents. Nevertheless, it is from this General Association of German Workingmen that the present-day German Social

Democracy is derived in unbroken apostolic succession, and, as I hope to show, the "deposit of faith and morals" delivered by the Master Lassalle during his brief ministry to a mere handful of rather ignorant and poverty-stricken German workers (many of them of Jewish extraction) has been preserved jealously and zealously—one might almost say superstitiously—for the guidance and inspiration of some four and a quarter million German voters (1912). The real beginning of German Social Democracy dates from Lassalle's "Open Reply Letter" (*Offenes Antwort-Schreiben*) of 1863 rather than from the "Communist Manifesto" launched by Marx and Engels in 1848.

What was the essence of the gospel according to Lassalle? In the first place, it dogmatized the popular conviction that force and violence could not materially further any radical cause. Lassalle despised the French Revolution of 1789 as a compromising bourgeois revolution. He thought the German failure of 1848 only natural. Under the spell of Fichte and Hegel, he held in common with Marx and Engels that historical evolution (*Entwicklung*) is gradual and is determined by changing economic conditions, but, truer to Hegel and Fichte than Marx and Engels had been, he extolled the State as an eternal, unchanging concept, an end in itself. In this sense he quoted a passage from an address of Boeckh's in which the celebrated antiquarian appealed from the "State-Concept of Liberalism", the passive-policeman idea, to the "antique civilization" (*Kultur*) which had become once and for all the inalienable foundation of the German mind and which had given birth to the notion that the concept of the State must be so far enlarged that "the State shall be the institution in which the whole virtue of mankind shall realize itself".<sup>4</sup> "The immemorial vestal fire of all civilization, the State, I defend with you against those modern barbarians" (*i. e.*, the Progressives of Prussia), he exclaimed to the judges of the Berlin *Kammergericht* in his speech on "Indirect Taxation".<sup>5</sup> So ideological did he make his concept of the State that he instilled into the workers a semi-mystical reverence for even the active-policeman Prussian State of his own day. In this respect a most literal Hegelian, he never uttered any of the ambiguities which characterized Marx and Engels. The one thing which he held in common with the Progressives was an abhorrence of violence.

<sup>4</sup> The clearest statement of Lassalle's idea of the State and of his repugnance to violent revolution is to be found in the *Arbeiterprogramm* (ed. Bernstein), II. 9-50 (1893), although all his writings are impregnated with the same idea and the same repugnance.

<sup>5</sup> *Die Indirekte Steuer* (ed. Bernstein), II. 388 (1893).

A second note of Lassalle's gospel was an unwavering belief in the inevitability and desirability of political democracy. Here he was one with the British Chartists. He wished redress of workingmen's grievances; he championed productive co-operative societies as the goal of social reform. But in his opinion co-operative societies and redress of grievances could come only by means of state aid and state action, and the assistance of the State would be forthcoming only when a class-conscious proletariat should become a political force, and the only way in which the proletarians could exert direct and commanding influence would be through universal manhood suffrage. To the very end Lassalle held fast to his conviction that the demands of the General Association of German Workingmen should be limited to this one point: "Universal suffrage in order to obtain state help for productive co-operative societies".<sup>6</sup>

When Lassalle preached his simple gospel, Prussia, it must be remembered, was in the throes of a desperate constitutional conflict. On one side was the Conservative government, headed since September, 1862, by Bismarck, backed by the Junkers and lauded by the Evangelical clergy, a government determined not only to effect thoroughgoing military reforms but also to safeguard the ideals of von Gerlach<sup>7</sup> and the *Kreuz Zeitung*—the Christian State, divine-right monarchy, "historic rights", benevolent and bureaucratic paternalism, invocation of the God of Might. On the other side was the Progressive majority in the House of Representatives, whose ideal of monarchy was much nearer to the traditions of the British Hanoverians and of the French Orleanists than to those of the Prussian Hohenzollerns, and whose ideal of economic society approximated that of the Manchester school rather than that of Hegel or of Fichte; their immediate programme was, of course, to assure "liberty" to the individual and constitutional parliamentary government to Prussia. Had all the forces opposed to Bismarck and his Conservative régime been able to co-operate, the outcome of the struggle might have been quite different. But, as has often happened, divisions among its opponents and mutual recriminations between their camps proved a veritable godsend to the government. The Progressives distrusted if they did not despise the Socialist workingmen. Lassalle hit back manfully; he

<sup>6</sup> Cf. the *Offenes Antwort-Schreiben* (ed. Bernstein), II. 409-445 (1893).

<sup>7</sup> Ernst Ludwig v. Gerlach (1795-1877), the great intellectual proponent of German Conservatism. Cf. the *Aufzeichnungen aus seinem Leben und Wirken* (ed. Jakob v. Gerlach, 1903, 2 vols.).

taught his followers to hate the Progressives and to give free expression to their hatred.<sup>8</sup>

Enough has been said to make clear how fundamental and how natural were the divergences between Lassalle and the Progressives. Lassalle styled the Progressives a "clique" and inveighed against "a Louis-Philippe monarchy created by the bourgeoisie".<sup>9</sup> To Karl Marx the conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat was part of an elaborate epic economic *theory*; to Ferdinand Lassalle it was rather the precise, definite political *fact* of the fight between the Prussian Progressives and his own Workingmen's Association. Marx, in order to subdue the bourgeoisie, would have the proletariat make no terms whatsoever with the landed aristocracy and other supports of a conservative society which to him represented but an anachronistic survival of an older economic struggle. Lassalle, on the other hand, for reasons of practical politics in Germany, found himself gradually impelled into Conservative or quasi-Conservative lanes and by-ways. He could see good points in what the English have termed "Tory Socialism" more clearly than in middle-class liberalism; and many of his utterances must have been as pleasing to Bismarck as they were angering to the Progressives. He insisted that in the pending constitutional conflict the Prussian Conservative government could not and should not yield to "the clique", but he suggested that

it might well call the people upon the scene and trust to them. To do this, it need but call to mind the origin of the monarchy, for all monarchy has originally been monarchy of the people. . . . A Louis-Philippe monarchy certainly could not do this; but a monarchy that still stands as kneaded out of its original dough, leaning upon the hilt of the sword, might quite certainly do this if it determined to pursue truly great, national, and democratic aims.<sup>10</sup>

Though Eduard Bernstein, the foremost authority on matters Lassallean, has assailed the usually accepted idea of Lassalle's intense nationalism,<sup>11</sup> the fact remains, nevertheless, that Bismarck in the pursuit of his foreign policy would have found a more loyal equerry in the leader of the Association of German Workingmen than in any member of the parliamentary majority. Lassalle ardently desired the political unification of Germany and perceived

<sup>8</sup> Lassalle set the pace in his vindictive *Herr Bastiat-Schulze von Delitzsch, der Oekonomische Julian, oder Kapital und Arbeit* (January, 1864).

<sup>9</sup> *Der Hochverraths-Prozess wider Ferd. Lassalle vor dem Staatsgerichtshof zu Berlin am 12. März 1864* (ed. Bernstein), II. 743-830 (1893).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Bernstein, *Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer*.



readily that real unity could be obtained only by the arms of Prussia and the exclusion of Austria. As early as 1859, in a brochure on the Italian War,<sup>12</sup> he unfolded the plan which Bismarck was to execute seven years later. Possibly at some future date unified Germany might be transformed peaceably into a national republican state, but in the meantime the domination of Prussia would be essential. This power, reactionary *par excellence*, was called to be the instrument for national union and for the emancipation of the working class, and that, through social royalty and state socialism.

Without attempting to give a comprehensive view of Lassalle's career,<sup>13</sup> it has seemed worth while to dwell at some length upon certain features of his work which were destined for a long while to influence the German Social Democrats. Particularly, his policy of combating the liberal bourgeoisie and of coquetting with the court was maintained in full vigor by Jean Baptista von Schweitzer, the president of the party from 1864 to 1872 and editor of the *Sozialdemokrat*, the official organ of the movement. Schweitzer, like Lassalle, believed that if Bismarck could be prevailed upon to utilize the lower classes as a counterpoise to the obstreperous middle-class Progressives, the king out of the plenitude of his royal grace and benevolence might freely grant the fundamental demand of the General Association, *universal suffrage in order to obtain state help for productive co-operative societies*; and in this question of tactics Schweitzer went further than Lassalle in adopting a positively fawning attitude toward the Hohenzollern family and the aristocratic Prussian Minister-President. Early in January, 1865, a leading article in the *Sozialdemokrat* indicated that the best solution of the Schleswig-Holstein problem would be the unconditional annexation of the disputed provinces to Prussia; and in a series of articles on "The Bismarck Ministry", running from January 27 to March 1, Schweitzer declared that the only two forces capable of dealing successfully with the question of national unification were the proletariat and the Prussian army. He spoke of

<sup>12</sup> *Der Italienische Krieg und die Aufgabe Preussens: eine Stimme aus der Demokratie* (pub. anonymously, 1859).

<sup>13</sup> The authoritative works on Lassalle's career are: Becker, *Geschichte der Arbeiter-Agitation Ferdinand Lassalles* (1874); Brandes, *Ferdinand Lassalle: ein Literarisches Charakterbild* (1877, Eng. trans. 1911); Dawson, *German Socialism and Ferdinand Lassalle* (1888); Bernstein, *Ferdinand Lassalle as a Social Reformer* (1893), and *Ferdinand Lassalle und seine Bedeutung für die Arbeiter-Klasse* (1904); and Harms, *Ferdinand Lassalle und seine Bedeutung für die Deutsche Sozialdemokratie* (1909).

"the mighty genius" of Frederick the Great, "a man admirable in every respect", and of "the remarkable" and "the praiseworthy" policy of Bismarck.

It has long been customary for Socialist historians and apologists to denounce Schweitzer as "the paid agent of Bismarck" and as a renegade (and something of a renegade he was, after 1872) and to emphasize the differences between his corrupt movement on the one hand and the pure movement of Wilhelm Liebknecht and August Bebel on the other. A re-examination and reappraisal of the facts in the matter, however, while establishing neither proof nor disproof of Schweitzer's alleged acceptance of bribes from Bismarck, would seem to show that Liebknecht and Schweitzer were separated far less on the question of Socialist principles than on the question of political tactics. Liebknecht, it is true, during his thirteen years' exile in England lived much in the society of Marx and Engels and shared their radical views to a greater degree than Lassalle or Schweitzer. But Marx and Engels by this time were not preaching violence or rebellion; and that there was no incompatibility of major tactics between Lassalle and Liebknecht is evidenced by the fact that the latter was a great admirer of the standard-bearer of English Tory Socialism. Disraeli's *Sybil* was translated by Liebknecht's wife and given an honorable place in the German Socialist library. Liebknecht himself, like Marx and Engels, trusted the feudal aristocracy of Prussia less than that of England and disliked Lassalle's flirtations with Bismarck as well as the autocratic organization of the General Association of German Workingmen. But a difference of quite another sort better explains the bitterness with which Liebknecht and his disciple Bebel subsequently assailed Schweitzer and the General Association. Bebel was a Saxon and Liebknecht was a native of Hesse, and both men shared the South Germans' fear and hatred of Prussia. Liebknecht, an *enfant terrible* of 1848-1849, had come to decry the use of violence as a result of his stirring and disheartening experiences in those years, but he never lost faith in the ultimate triumph of the ideal of that revolutionary movement—a Greater Germany welded together under a republican form of government for the attainment of thoroughgoing social democracy. These principles might be the eventual goal of Lassalle and Schweitzer, but the means of reaching the goal were quite different. The latter, as we have seen, would solve the immediate problem of German unification precisely as Bismarck was preparing to solve it; Liebknecht and Bebel, on the other hand, would hark back to the days of the

Frankfort Assembly and would achieve national unification not under the aegis of Prussia, not with the aid of militarism, not at the expense of the exclusion of Austria. The result was that in February, 1865, while Schweitzer was penning his fulsome praises of Bismarck's Schleswig-Holstein policy, Liebknecht resigned his connection with the *Sozialdemokrat* and turned his attention to propaganda in Saxony, which then was a field ripening to the anti-Prussian harvester. To his own brand of Socialism Liebknecht speedily won August Bebel and a sufficient number of other Saxon workingmen to admit of the election of himself and Bebel as representatives of a *Sächsische Volkspartei* in the Reichstag of the North German Confederation.

In this Reichstag, newly created in 1867 as a result of the Seven Weeks' War, Liebknecht and Bebel found themselves beside Schweitzer, who had been elected by votes of the General Association of German Workingmen. Their differences about national policy were more patent than ever. Schweitzer insisted upon taking the credit for Bismarck's condescending acquiescence in the establishment of universal manhood suffrage in the North German Confederation; he considered the Confederation a *fait accompli* which should not be undone if it could, and which should be utilized to further social and economic reforms for the workingmen. Liebknecht and Bebel, on the other hand, maintained that universal suffrage for the Reichstag was delusive so long as it was hedged about by so many constitutional restrictions and rendered impotent by the retention of the three-class electoral system in all-powerful Prussia; they protested vehemently against the very existence of the North German Confederation as consecrating the policy of violence and of Prussian monarchical domination; they refused to make terms with a political order based on brute force, injustice, and autocracy.

In vain did Liebknecht endeavor to discredit Schweitzer with the majority of the General Association. Unable to force him out of its presidency, Liebknecht at length convened a minority congress at Eisenach in August, 1869, and there formed a rival organization—the Social Democratic Workingmen's Party (*Sozialdemokratische Arbeiterpartei*)—with a Marxian programme and a Marxian organization. The secessionists from the Lassallean association were promptly affiliated with the International which Karl Marx had launched at London in 1864, only a few weeks after the death of Lassalle. From 1869 to 1875 the two rival societies existed side by side and for some time Eisenachers and Lassalleans vied with

each other in the art of calling names: the Eisenachers accused the Lassalleans of accepting bribes from the Prussian government; the Lassalleans retaliated by styling the Eisenachers "traitors" and charging them with being the agents of the bourgeoisie.

Such was the situation when on July 19, 1870, the Reichstag of the North German Confederation was convened in extraordinary session to grant credits for the war which France had just proclaimed against Prussia. The Reichstag voted the credits unanimously except for the two votes of Bebel and Liebknecht. The latter merely withheld their votes: casting them in the negative might seem to countenance the criminal policy of Napoleon III.; casting them in the affirmative would certainly be construed as an endorsement of the inevitable outcome of the Bismarckian "crime of 1866". The deputies of the Lassallean faction and one Eisenacher, believing that Prussia had been outrageously attacked by the jealous and ambitious emperor of the French, voted the appropriations necessary for the conduct of the war.

After Sedan, all the German Socialists, both Eisenachers and Lassalleans, declared and voted against the continuation of a war which they considered no longer defensive. A "Manifesto to the German Workingmen", published by the party executive of the Eisenachers on September 5, 1870, stated that

it is a duty of the German people, and indeed it is in their own interests, to accord an honorable peace to the French Republic. . . . Above all it is the duty of the German workingmen, among whom the solidarity of interests between the German and French peoples has become a sacred conviction and who see in the French workingmen only brothers and comrades to whom they are united by a common lot and by common aspirations, to secure for the French Republic such a peace. . . . It is absolutely necessary that in all places the party, in accordance with our manifesto, shall organize popular demonstrations as imposing as possible against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and in favor of an honorable peace with the French Republic.<sup>14</sup>

The answer of Bismarck's government to this appeal was the imprisonment of its signatories by military order in the fortress of Boyen near the Russian frontier and the quick forcible breaking-up of every attempted demonstration inspired by it. On November 24, when the government opened the regular session of the Reichstag and demanded a new loan for the prosecution of the war, Liebknecht and Bebel were quite outspoken in urging the rejection of the loan and in begging the chancellor to terminate the war without any annexations. In December, the two annoying and

<sup>14</sup> Carl Stegmann and C. Hugo, *Handbuch des Socialismus* (1897), art. "Eisenacher", p. 170.

talkative deputies were arrested, together with Hepner, the associate editor of the *Volkstaat*, the official organ of the Eisenachers, on the charge of "inciting to high treason". After three months and a half of close surveillance—the war by that time being practically concluded—the accused were given provisional liberty. Subsequently, in March, 1872, they were tried at Leipzig: Hepner was acquitted, but Liebknecht and Bebel were condemned to two years' confinement in a military fortress; and Bebel was released in 1874 only to be clapped into jail another nine months for lèse-majesté.<sup>15</sup> Beside these leaders of the Eisenachers, four members of the Leipzig committee and numerous other members of the party had been accused of organizing protests against the later developments of the Franco-Prussian War and had been condemned to various terms of imprisonment.

Nor were the government's prosecutions directed solely against the Eisenachers. The Lassalleans themselves, who up to Sedan had been under Bismarck's spell and had been magnanimously tolerated by him, now broke with him and paid the penalty by losing his protection. While they acclaimed the overthrow of Napoleon III. and the establishment of the German Empire, they denounced the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine; and the failure of Schweitzer to secure re-election to the Reichstag in 1871 lost him both his popularity with his followers and his usefulness to Bismarck. Moreover, the Lassalleans all along had based their admiration for the chancellor upon his strenuous opposition to the hated bourgeoisie, but now in the early 'seventies Bismarck was apparently surrendering himself completely to the programme and the policies of the National Liberals and the Free Conservatives, those very elements of the national life which the Lassalleans most distrusted. To cap the climax, in June, 1874, the Imperial Prosecutor Tessen-  
dorf obtained a court order for the provisional closing of the General Association of German Workingmen. Whereupon, Toelcke, one of the Lassallean chieftains, wrote to Liebknecht and to Geib, a member of the Eisenach executive, proposing a corporate union of the rival Socialist organizations. At Gotha, accordingly, a joint congress assembled in May, 1875, comprising seventy-three delegates representing 16,000 Lassalleans, and fifty-six delegates representing some 9000 Eisenachers. The outcome, as everyone knows, was the

<sup>15</sup> Interesting side-lights on these events are supplied by *Der Hochverraths-Prozess wider Liebknecht, Bebel, Hepner, vor dem Schwurgericht zu Leipzig vom 11. bis 26. März 1872, mit einer Einleitung von W. Liebknecht* (1894), and by Bebel, *Aus meinem Leben* (3 vols., 1910-1914).

coalescence of the two groups into a well-knit "Socialist Workingmen's Party of Germany" (*Socialistische Arbeiterpartei Deutschlands*). In general, the Lassalleans had their say in the programme of the new organization, much to the chagrin of Karl Marx in distant London, and the Eisenachers contented themselves with democratizing the form of party administration. The comparative ease with which agreement was reached is proof positive of the fact that the mere "moderation" of Lassalle's fundamental principles had never been the real reason for the revolt of Liebknecht and Bebel.

It may seem surprising that the German Socialists considerably increased their enrolled number and their electoral strength in the decade of the 'seventies, since their ineffective but fierce opposition to the Franco-Prussian War and to the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine and their loud but dangerous praise of the revolutionary Paris Commune might naturally be expected to alienate the multitude of patriotic and order-loving Germans. In explanation of this phenomenon, it is to be observed, first, that *in Germany* the Socialists precipitated no riots and submitted to persecution in a most dutiful manner; secondly, that the larger measure of freedom of speech, of the press, of meeting, and of association, which characterized the first years of the German Empire under the influence of the National Liberal régime, afforded a better opportunity than ever before for Socialist propaganda; and thirdly, that the immediate mushroom growth of German industry and trade, consequent upon the erection of the empire and the payment of the French war indemnity, and resulting in the "Panic of 1873", rapidly huddled lower-class Germans into towns and cities, only to reduce many of them to want and suffering, and thereby greatly increased the potential number of those who would turn to the economic doctrines of Socialism for deliverance from their miserable plight. Socialism, as Liebknecht said, "became the barometer which indicated the general discontent". Even before the unifying Gotha Congress, Socialism was growing in Germany. In 1871 the Socialists polled 124,700 votes in the empire and elected two candidates to the Reichstag; in 1874 they polled 352,000 votes and elected nine deputies. The Gotha Congress contributed further to the effective propaganda of the Socialists, with the result that at the elections of 1877 they secured 493,300 votes and twelve members of the Reichstag. In 1877-1878, the work of making Socialist converts was being forwarded by forty-four political newspapers, one illustrated journal, a monthly and a semi-monthly review, two comic papers, and fourteen trade-union publications, in addition to *Vorwärts*, the party's official organ.

But Bismarck, once the courteous and agreeable host of Lassalle, was now becoming the avowed enemy of the Social Democrats. Formerly perceiving in them a useful foil to the hated Progressives, he now recognized their growth as a grave menace to his newer national policies. On May 20, 1878, closely following an unsuccessful attempt of a madman to take the emperor's life, the chancellor, with the consent of the Bundesrat, introduced an anti-Socialist bill in the Reichstag. So serious were its proposed infringements of personal liberty, however, that it was promptly rejected by the decisive vote of 251 to 57. On June 2 another attempt was made to assassinate William I., and this time Bismarck did not try to win the existing Reichstag to his measure; taking advantage of the excitement throughout the country, he caused the Bundesrat to dissolve the inconvenient lower house and to order new elections. The ensuing campaign was waged on the single issue of the proposed coercion of the Socialists, and the government, in order to secure a popular verdict in its favor, spread broadcast throughout the empire the idea that the Socialists were enemies of Kaiser, country, morality, and the family, that they were inciting to murder, rapine, and most bloody revolution, that they were outlaws *de facto* and should be outlaws *de jure*. The bulk of the electorate responded to these charges by appropriate shiverings and tremblings and by choosing a compliant Reichstag, which on October 18 enacted the anti-Socialist bill by a vote of 221 to 149, the squeamish minority being composed chiefly of Centrists and Radicals.

It is not necessary to define again the general scope or the many details of this anti-Socialist law, which, through various re-enactments,<sup>16</sup> remained in force until 1890, for these things are known to all students of German history. There are, however, certain aspects of the measure which have often been subordinated or quite neglected, but which, in view of their effects upon the German Social Democracy and likewise upon the empire as a whole, merit at least passing mention. In the first place, the tactics of Bismarck in securing the passage of the bill were largely responsible both for the popular fears of Socialism and for the resulting recoil from the Liberalism of the 'seventies to the Conservatism of the 'eighties. The electoral campaign of 1878 was the first occasion (though by no means the last) on which the government flaunted before the

<sup>16</sup> The law as enacted in October, 1878, was to remain in force until March 31, 1881. It was re-enacted in May, 1880, to September 30, 1884; May, 1884, to September 30, 1886; April, 1886, to September 30, 1888; and February, 1888, to September 30, 1890.

eyes of patriotic, peace-loving, property-owning Germans the bogey of Socialism, the "red spectre" of mob violence, treason, and terrorism. So effective was this invocation of an imaginary demon, that Liberalism, if not Social Democracy, was immediately weakened,<sup>17</sup> and Bismarck was thenceforth free to break his unnatural *liaison* with the Liberals and to return to his earlier Conservative love. The period from 1878 to 1890 was not only the period of the anti-Socialist law; it was also the period of Conservative rather than Liberal influence; its ideal was benevolent bureaucratic paternalism instead of individual liberty and national *laissez faire*; it was characterized by the establishment of tariff-protectionism, overseas imperialism, and Bismarckian State Socialism. So successful, indeed, was the electoral *coup* of 1878 that not only Bismarck himself but subsequent and less original chancellors found it expedient rather frequently to terrify the German people with the red rag of Socialism and thereby to elicit from them a verdict favorable to militarism, to tariff reform "upwards", to colonialism and *Welt-politik*, or to any other policy which an essentially unrepresentative government might at any time wish to foist upon the German nation.

In this way, the anti-Socialist law called an abrupt halt to the progress of liberty and democracy in the empire. In the late 'sixties and early 'seventies it had seemed as if united Germany was to play quite a different political rôle from historic Austria or Prussia. Universal equal suffrage had been introduced in the North German Confederation and extended to the empire. The North German Confederation had legalized coalitions and associations of artisans for trade purposes. The empire had adopted on May 7, 1874, a law on the freedom of the press, providing that neither the administration nor the courts could deprive any citizen of the right of carrying on any part of a publishing business and that the only limitations upon the exercise of this right should be such as would secure a fair amount of publicity and lessen national danger in time of war. A reaction against these liberal and democratic tendencies was foreshadowed by the anti-Catholic laws which attended the Kulturkampf. But the anti-Catholic laws were mainly *state* laws, while the anti-Socialist law was *federal*, and with the passage of the latter the reaction was in full swing. Associations, meetings, publications, and collections of money alike,

<sup>17</sup> In the Reichstag, National Liberal deputies numbered 141 in 1877; 109 in 1878; 47 in 1881; and 42 in 1890. Progressive deputies numbered 39 in 1877; 29 in 1878; and 32 in 1887. The popular vote of the National Liberals, amounting in 1877 to 1,604,300, had decreased in 1878 to 1,486,800, and in 1890 to 1,177,800.



which "by means of Social Democratic, socialistic, or communistic designs, aim at the overthrow of the existing order of state or of society", were to be prohibited, and likewise such associations, meetings, publications, and collections of money in which these designs, though not the expressed object, appear "to endanger the public peace and in particular the harmony of the different classes of the population". The execution of the law was entrusted not to the regular courts but to the police authorities of the several states and, on appeal, to a special Imperial Commission composed of four members of the Bundesrat and five judges appointed by the emperor. A final section of the law contained the most reactionary provisions: whenever the "intrigues of the Socialists" promised "to endanger the public peace", the ministry of any state might, with the consent of the Bundesrat, arbitrarily suspend constitutional guarantees and decree a "lesser state of siege" (*i. e.*, police law).<sup>18</sup>

And the law was vigorously enforced! During the twelve years from 1878 to 1890, all public activities of the Social Democrats were stopped in Germany, except in the Reichstag and state legislatures; 352 associations were dissolved; 1299 publications were banned; the "lesser state of siege", proclaimed for periods at Berlin, Hamburg, Harburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt-am-Main, Hanau, Offenbach, Stettin, and Spremberg, led to the arbitrary expulsion of 893 persons, including 504 married men with 973 children dependent upon them; and imprisonments imposed by police authorities for violation of the measure aggregated 850 years, 5 months, and 19 days.<sup>19</sup> But more grievous than the actual imprisonments and banishments under the anti-Socialist law was the fact that many of the people who in 1871 accounted themselves Liberal as well as National now gave support to arbitrary measures which certainly put Bismarck in a class with Metternich. The only difference between the assailants of popular liberties was that Metternich had no popular mandate for his acts while Bismarck commanded a majority of the deputies elected by universal direct suffrage throughout Germany. The German people of the new era must share with

<sup>18</sup> An excellent analysis and criticism of the law is to be found in an article by Henry W. Farnam in the *Journal of the American Social Science Association*, XIII. 36-53 (1880). See also R. von Gneist, *Das Reichsgesetz gegen die Gemeingefährlichen Bestrebungen der Sozialdemokratie* (1878), and Bamberger, *Die Culturgeschichtliche Bedeutung des Socialistengesetzes* (second ed., 1879).

<sup>19</sup> These statistics are cited in connection with the Socialists' observance of the 25th anniversary of the passage of the law. *Bericht des Parteivorstandes an den Parteitag zu Bremen in Protokoll* (1904), pp. 13-14.

their unrepresentative government the responsibility for a most serious set-back to liberty.

One other aspect of the anti-Socialist law invites our attention, and this is its effect upon the Social Democrats themselves. From first to last they submitted to the outrageous measure. They preached no violence, no rebellion. Smitten on one cheek, they turned the other cheerfully and dutifully. They seemed to be possessed of a holy joy, of an ecstatic other-worldly vision, like unto that of the early Christian martyrs. To their own traditions—those of Lassalle in the constitutional crisis of 1863, and of Liebknecht and Bebel in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870—they were absolutely true. They would be vocal but not violent. While the bill against them was pending in the Reichstag, *Vorwärts* printed at the top of every number the exhortation: "Party Comrades! Do not let yourselves be provoked to violence! The authorities are only anxious to shoot you down! The reaction needs riots in order to win its game."<sup>20</sup> With *Vorwärts* suppressed and with the party organization reduced to catacomb-like secrecy, the Socialists kept their passive form to the end. At the party congress held at St. Gall in Switzerland in October, 1887, they unanimously declared that

violence is as much a means of reaction as of revolution and in the past has been more often so used; the use of violence by individuals is not the sort of tactics which will lead to our goal, and, in so far as it wounds the sentiment of right among the masses, is positively to be condemned and accordingly rejected.<sup>21</sup>

It may well be that this persistently passive attitude of the Social Democrats in the face of their persecution was not unconnected with the growing devotion of their leaders during the period to Marxian, as opposed to Lassallean, principles, that is, to the fatalistic notion that the hardships and oppressions of capitalistic society simply cannot be prevented from accumulating and multiplying up to the day of the millennial cataclysm when the faithful will automatically be delivered from bondage and will enter into the Promised Land. Not from Bismarck or any other governmental potentate could salvation come, but only from the slow, painful, inevitable evolution of capitalism. At any rate, after 1880, Marxian tenets sank deeply into the German Socialist consciousness. The appearance of Friedrich Engels's *Herrn Eugen Dührings Umwäl-*

<sup>20</sup> Stegmann and Hugo, *Handbuch des Socialismus* (1897), art. "Socialistische Arbeiterpartei", p. 761.

<sup>21</sup> *Verhandlungen des Parteitages der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie in St. Gallen abgehalten 2. bis 6. Oktober 1887.*

*zung der Wissenschaft* contributed to this end; and *Die Neue Zeit*, founded by Karl Kautsky in 1883, was conducted from the outset in a rigidly Marxian sense. The Gotha programme of 1875, as we have seen, was more Lassallean than Marxian, but in 1890, at the congress of Halle, the first held on German soil after the lapse of the anti-Socialist law, it was unanimously resolved that

Whereas the Gotha programme, however excellent it has proven itself in the struggles of the last fifteen years, is no longer abreast of the times in every respect, the party executive is hereby authorized and directed to propose a revised programme for consideration at the next congress.

The resulting Erfurt programme in its theoretical part not only disposed of Lassallean catchwords—the “iron law of wages” and the demand for co-operative productive associations—but, what was still more characteristic, it substituted for the universal and ethical features of Lassalle’s doctrine the historico-economic definition of Socialism which Marx had sketched in the *Communist Manifesto* and developed in *Das Capital*.<sup>22</sup>

One might expect that as the German Social Democracy between 1875 and 1891 swung more and more from the teachings of Lassalle to those of Marx, the movement would take on an even more radical and “revolutionary” complexion. It is indeed true that while the German Socialists during the period of their persecution were holding their congresses outside of Germany they emphasized as never before or since the *international* character of their movement and the sacred solidarity of all the world’s workingmen. But, contrary to general expectations, several developments of the period tended to make the agitation in Germany even less radical and “revolutionary”.

In the first place, the forcible expulsion of the most radical leaders from Germany left the conduct of party affairs to the “moderates”, the particular friends of law and order. Many of the exiles never returned to Germany, and of those who did return a goodly number had acquired from an extended sojourn in England a real respect and admiration for the Fabian tactics of slow, quiet education.<sup>23</sup>

Secondly, the Social Democratic leaders in Germany had discovered that the methods to be pursued in proselytizing from among the intelligent skilled workers in the trade-unions were less likely

<sup>22</sup> Conrad Schmidt, “Condition of Social Democracy in Germany”, *Journal of Political Economy*, VI. 505 (1898).

<sup>23</sup> Eduard Bernstein is an excellent example of this type of Socialist exile from Germany. He resided in England from 1888 to 1902.

to bring them into conflict with the police and consequently to result in punishment under the anti-Socialist law than were the street-corner harangues addressed to the unskilled, unorganized, lowest-class workingmen. Numerical gains to the Socialist cause were far greater, during the period, from among trade-unionists—the “aristocracy of labor”—than from among the lowest orders of the laboring class. Trade-unionists turned naturally to Socialism as soon as the government impaired the right of association, but they were far less interested in the theoretical side of Socialism than in the practical. They were doubting Thomases about the paradise beyond the cataclysm and they were downright sceptical of what Georges Sorel has termed the “social myth” of the “general strike”; they were, however, intent upon exercising their political rights to the end that they might forthwith secure higher pay, shorter hours, and better working and living conditions. They rendered lip-service to the Marxian creed but at heart they were Lassalleans. They constituted a conservative bulwark to German Socialism.

Then, in the third place, it was during the period of the anti-Socialist law that the German Social Democracy began to draw to itself a number of *voters* far in excess of the number of its regularly enrolled *members*. In other words, it was during this time that many middle-class Germans, caring little or nothing about the purely economic dogmas or the ultimate goal of Socialism, began to cast votes for Social Democratic candidates for the Reichstag as the most obvious and direct rebuke to an illiberal and unrepresentative government, which was most seriously abridging the freedom of speech, of association, of meeting, and of the press. The contemporaneous decline of the National Liberal and Progressive parties was not due wholly to defections to conservatism; it illuminatingly paralleled the growth of the electoral strength of the Social Democrats. Thus, the popular vote for Socialist candidates, reduced to 312,000 in 1881, rose to 550,000 in 1884, to 763,100 in 1887, and to 1,427,300 in 1890; while the number of Socialist deputies in the Reichstag increased from nine in 1878 to thirty-five in 1890. The “extra members” of the German Social Democracy had no direct voice in the deliberations of the party congresses or in the decisions of the party executive, but as time went on there was a growing tendency on the part of congress and executive not to make decisions which would alienate votes and thereby lessen the influence which a steadily augmenting poll-strength might exert upon the reactionary government. The getting of votes was becom-

ing all-important; and indirectly middle-class liberals were pointing the Socialist party organization into the path of opportunism. And in seeming confirmation of the value of the peaceful tactics pursued by the party from 1878 to 1890 could be cited a sort of Socialist "prosperity" evidenced not only in an increase of votes but also in a remarkable increase of funds in the party treasury. At the Congress of Halle in 1890, August Bebel explained that the regular receipts had been 37,410 marks in 1880, 95,000 in 1883, 208,655 in 1887, and in the current year had risen to 324,322 marks, and that of the last amount over one-third had been saved; "the Socialist party", he added, in the midst of general hilarity, "become capitalistic, seeks good investments abroad for fear of confiscation at home".

Bebel should not have feared confiscation at home. Bismarck, it is true, still maintained that the only defect of the anti-Socialist law was its leniency, but neither the Reichstag nor William II. would hear of re-enacting it, to say nothing of making it more drastic, and this, despite the fact that the Social Democracy was a greater political force in 1890 than in 1878. So impressed was the young emperor with the importance of Socialism, that he sought to deal with it in a clement and kindly spirit.<sup>24</sup> His ousting of Bismarck in 1890 signified, so far as the Social Democrats were concerned, the passing of Diocletian and the coming of Constantine.

For the happy ending of their twelve years' bondage, the Social Democrats themselves ascribed the praise not to the favor of a clement prince but to their own energy and endeavors, and above all to the persistently peaceful tactics which they had employed. "No violence, no rebellion", was a slogan which in their opinion had amply justified itself in a most pragmatic test.

In 1890 the German Social Democracy came out of its catacombs, and at Halle inaugurated the series of great annual congresses which assembled regularly on German soil down to the Jena Congress of 1913. The public organization of the party, as we know it, with its five-member executive, its commission of control, its Reichstag group, its annual congress, its treasury, its affiliated trade-unions, its branches for women and for youths, and its official publications, was inaugurated at the Halle Congress of 1890 and perfected at the Mainz Congress of 1900. Its programme was revised and promulgated at the Erfurt Congress of 1891. The Ger-

<sup>24</sup> See on this point the *Memoirs* of Prince Hohenlohe and the *Reminiscences* of Prince Bismarck. It was in 1890 that William II. convened at Berlin the International Congress on Labor Legislation. Cf. *Europäischer Geschichtskalender* for 1890 and 1891.

man Social Democracy was prepared to resume the open propaganda which it had been obliged to abandon in 1878. But upon the purposes and methods of the propaganda after 1890, the persecutions of the preceding period, 1878-1890, left an indelible imprint.

Congress after congress repeated the formulas of Marxian Socialism—economic determinism, the class struggle, the inevitable social cataclysm of the future, demands for political democracy and for collective ownership and operation of all the economic means of production and distribution, unswerving opposition to the whole capitalistic system, particularly to indirect taxes, militarism, and imperialism. Nor was Marxian internationalism ever lost sight of. German Social Democrats were conspicuous in the councils of the Socialist International. The executive of the German party repeatedly voted appropriations and authorized the collection of special funds for the aid of comrades in other countries, in England, in Belgium, in Denmark, in Austria. The German party, while stigmatizing the Boer War as a barbarous and abominable war of conquest, combated manfully the growing Anglophobia in Germany. At the very time when the German "patriot" press was hypnotizing public opinion by the spectacle of British "atrocities" in South Africa, the Socialist press was exposing the atrocities of the allied troops in China, especially of the German contingent, in the biting sarcasmic "Letters of the Huns".<sup>25</sup>

To make of the Marxian formulas living realities, it would not suffice to resort to violence and revolution. That was the capital lesson of the Era of Persecution. As Liebknecht said at the Congress of Erfurt:

If we should now accord chief importance to physical force, we should place ourselves in the position of our enemies. Bismarck was the man of brute force, the man of iron and blood. No one has ever employed greater means of force or acted in manner more unscrupulous. And the result? What has become of him? He had at his disposal for more than a quarter of a century the police, the army, the money, the power of the State, in short all the means of physical force, while we could oppose him only with our good right, our good conviction, our naked breasts—and *we* have conquered. Our arms have been the better. In time brute force must yield to the moral factors, to the logic of events. Bismarck retired in disgrace—and the Social Democracy is the strongest party in Germany. Is not this a potent proof of the value of our present tactics? . . . The essence of revolution does not lie in the means but in the end. Violence for thousands of years has been a reactionary factor.<sup>26</sup>

No one in the party [said Bebel eight years later at the Congress of

<sup>25</sup> Milhaud, *La Démocratie Socialiste Allemande* (1903).

<sup>26</sup> *Protokoll des Parteitage* (1891), pp. 205-206.

Hanover] can have any doubt of what we think of violent revolution. It is absurd to admit that there is in our party a single person who would feel disposed to precipitate a revolution if he thought that he could attain his goal much better, much more easily, and much more simply. It is not revolutionaries who precipitate revolutions, but in each and every instance it has been reactionaries. [*Lively applause.*] Even the great Goethe said to his Eckermann that when revolution occurs the fault is wholly the government's; and I could cite you a dozen passages from writers, even from old Mommsen, who as a good classicist states in his *Roman History* that when a government shows itself incapable of fulfilling its duties in the interest of the great majority of the citizens, then it is right to precipitate a revolution, then the fault is not on the side of those who have recourse to violence but is on the side of those who have driven them to it. And, comrades, with us in Germany the bourgeoisie at all times has acted on this principle.<sup>27</sup>

Here again the theorists and leaders were applying their historical fatalism. *Fata viam invenient*. For the future, let princes and chancellors be good or bad, favorable or not, it would matter little. The best Caesars could not prevent the Roman Empire from going to dissolution and ruin.<sup>28</sup>

To be sure, the German governments did not take at full face value the peaceful protestations of the Socialists; they continued after the lapse of the anti-Socialist law to fight the movement with every weapon at their disposal. The Prussian State Secretary for the Interior directed his under-officials in 1893 to "oppose the progress of the Social Democracy by every possible means"; and the Saxon Minister of the Interior issued a circular instructing the local authorities, "in order to conform to the intentions of the government, to interpret any law which they might invoke against the Social Democrats according to political considerations".<sup>29</sup> In 1895 Liebknecht was condemned to four months' imprisonment for lèse-majesté for having declared at the Congress of Breslau that "Under cover of the highest power in the State, injury is done the Social Democracy; under the cover of the highest power in the State, the gauntlet is thrown down to our party and we are provoked to mortal combat". But the Social Democrats had already derived too many advantages from their martyrdoms really to wish a complete cessation of persecution after 1890. With an almost Christian boastfulness and mirth did they dwell upon the thought of bolts and bars, and of the rich electoral harvest that was to be reaped from the wide advertisement of their sufferings. Lieb-

<sup>27</sup> *Protokoll des Parteitage* (1899), p. 121.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Bourdeau, *Le Socialisme Allemand et le Nihilisme Russe* (second ed., 1894), p. 86.

<sup>29</sup> *Protokoll des Parteitage* (1894), p. 28.

knecht gleefully paid the penalty for his crime of lèse-majesté during the winter of 1897-1898, and being released on March 18, the anniversary of the revolution of 1848, more gleefully still recounted his martyrdom to a monster mass-meeting held at Berlin in celebration of the event. "I can be content", he had already written, "with the Breslau trial. If Paris was worth a Mass, this trial was well worth four months in prison. The advantages which we derive from it have been a good bargain."<sup>30</sup> A conspicuous place in every annual report of the party executive, moreover, was reserved for an exhibit of the total terms of detention in workhouse and in prison, and of the total fines meted out to Socialist "martyrs". The exhibit was deemed an excellent bit of propaganda and at least until 1900 was quite imposing.<sup>31</sup>

Meanwhile, the German Social Democracy grew apace. Its popular vote increased to 1,786,700 in 1893, to 2,107,100 in 1898, and to 3,010,800 in 1903, while its deputies in the Reichstag numbered 44 in 1893, 56 in 1898, and 81 in 1903. As in the preceding period, a large part of its electoral increment came from "extra members"; but from regularly enrolled paying members the returns to the party treasury amounted in 1893 to 258,326 marks, in 1898 to 315,866, and in 1903 to 628,247.<sup>32</sup> The causes of this noteworthy growth in votes and in financial resources are to be found in the marvellously rapid contemporaneous expansion of German trade and German industry, in the lapse of the anti-Socialist law, which

<sup>30</sup> *Der Prozess Liebknecht. Vorhandlung wegen Majestäts-Beleidigung vor dem Landgericht zu Breslau* (sixth ed., 1896), preface by Liebknecht, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> After 1900, the average fines remained about the same as before, but the terms of imprisonment tended to decrease in measure as the "loyalty" of the Socialists increased: 35 years in 1901; 68 years in 1906; 36 years in 1907, and in 1910; only 7 years and 8 months in 1912; and for the first six months of 1913, three years and three months! The statistics throughout are taken from the *Berichte des Parteivorstandes* to the several party congresses.

	Imprisonment					Fines	
1891	87	years,	6	months,	28	days	18,262 marks
1892	117	"	0	"	26	"	20,532 "
1893	86	"	8	"	26	"	31,937 "
1894	58	"	8	"	6	"	43,747 "
1895	83	"	4	"	1	"	34,120 "
1896	84	"	8	"	8	"	31,773 "
1897	118	"	8	"	3	"	28,229 "
1898	54	"	7	"	10	"	19,948 "
1899	74	"	1	"	0	"	23,251 "
1900	71	"	3	"	23	"	16,427 "

<sup>32</sup> The receipts of the party treasury further increased in 1908 to 852,976 marks and in 1913 to 1,469,718. The surplus of income over expenditure from 1891 to 1913 amounted to more than two million marks.



now rendered Socialist propaganda enormously easier and more effective, in the "martyr's pose" which the Social Democrats continued to assume and to utilize for arousing the sympathies of their liberally-minded fellow-citizens, in the perfecting of the organization of the allied "Red" trade-unions,<sup>33</sup> and, last but not least, in the changed circumstances of German foreign politics which now rendered it possible for the party for the first time in its history to make a "patriotic" appeal to the German people.

It must be remembered that the retirement of Bismarck in 1890 marked not only the end of exceptional legislation against the Social Democrats but also a momentous revolution in the empire's foreign policy. For more than a century Russia and Prussia had lived side by side in pretty amicable relations with each other, sometimes in formal alliance; and Socialists and Radicals alike had come to look upon a Russo-German *entente* as a mighty prop of "Tsarism" and "barbarism" and consequently as the gravest menace to political democracy and free institutions within the German Empire. Now, in 1890, William II., to Bismarck's chagrin but to the delight of Radicals and Socialists, broke with the Tsar and held out an affectionate hand to England. And then, in 1891, when open flirtation began between the Russian autocracy and the French Republic, the Social Democrats found themselves drawn willy-nilly into sympathy with, and even support of, the Triple Alliance. For example, Georg von Vollmar, the leading Bavarian Socialist, in two remarkable speeches at Munich in the summer of 1891, declared that, although the foreign policies of 1866 and 1870 were wrong, the party should not squander its force in incessant and fruitless discussions of the past; Germany was now quite pacific, and the Triple Alliance must be defended as the best guarantee of world peace. France alone, according to Vollmar, was too chauvinistic, and it was a disgusting spectacle "to see the French Republic coquetting with Russian Tsarism and barbarism"; the French Socialists who sincerely preached peace were certainly in a small minority and were absolutely unable to influence the chauvinistic majority of Frenchmen.

In any case [said Vollmar] we can render only service to all true friends of peace in France and elsewhere by giving them to understand

<sup>33</sup> A convenient summary of the relation of the "Red" trade-unions to the Social Democratic Party is given by Professor S. P. Orth in his *Socialism and Democracy in Europe* (1913), pp. 171-179, as well as statistics (p. 295) gathered from *Statistisches Jahrbuch für das Deutsche Reich*. Cf. Schmoele, *Die Sozialdemokratischen Gewerkschaften in Deutschland seit dem Erlasse des Sozialistengesetzes* (1896 et seq.).

clearly and in a manner admitting of no doubt precisely what would be the attitude of the German Social Democracy in case of a declaration of war. If ever anywhere abroad it should be hoped that, in case of an attack directed against Germany, the aggressor could count on the German Social Democracy—in such hope one would be profoundly deceived. As soon as our country was attacked from without, there would be but a single party, and we Social Democrats would not be among the last to do our duty! And this duty we shall perform much more zealously if that enemy of all civilization—Russian barbarism—is involved.<sup>34</sup>

In the discussion of these views of Vollmar, at the Erfurt Congress, Bebel, though dissenting from some of their implications, had this to say:

Concerning an offensive war against Germany and its consequences I have insisted that we, equally with the gentlemen of the government, are Germans. . . . The German soil, the German country belongs to us, the masses, as well as to them. If Russia, the citadel of cruelty and barbarism, the foe of all human civilization, should attack Germany in order to weaken and dismember her—and such a war could have no other aim—we should have as much or more at stake than those who are at the head of Germany, and we would resist the aggressor. I have also insisted that if we should thus fight side by side with those who to-day are our adversaries, we would do so not to save them and their political and social order, but to deliver Germany, that is, *ourselves* and *our* soil, from a barbarian who is the greatest enemy of our aspirations and whose victory would signify our defeat as Socialists.<sup>35</sup>

The international events of 1890–1891 served likewise to silence Socialist protests against the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine. Already at the International Congress at Paris in 1889 the Socialist delegates from those provinces had declared that their doctrines obliged them to repudiate the idea of a war of revenge; and now the whole German Social Democracy persuaded itself that the annexation, originally outrageous, was nevertheless a *fait accompli*, and that Socialistic internationalism, by gradually effacing all distinctions between Germans and Frenchmen, would be the surest and best solution of the problem.<sup>36</sup>

Now that the German Social Democracy was moved to accept the annexation of Alsace-Lorraine as a *fait accompli* and to extol

<sup>34</sup> Georg von Vollmar, *Ueber die Nächsten Aufgaben der Deutschen Sozialdemokratie: zwei Reden gehalten am 1. Juni und 6. Juli 1891 in "Eldorado" zu München* (1891), pp. 9–10. Vollmar cited as confirmation of his position remarks of Liebknecht in the Reichstag on November 28, 1888, and on May 16, 1891, and in the Congress of Halle on October 15, 1890, of Bebel in the Reichstag on June 25, 1890, and of Auer in the Reichstag on December 3, 1890, and February 9, 1891.

<sup>35</sup> *Protokoll des Parteitagcs* (1891), p. 285.

<sup>36</sup> Edgard Milhaud, *La Démocratie Socialiste Allemande* (1903), pp. 261–262.

the Triple Alliance as a bulwark of world peace, why should it not co-operate with other *national* German parties in voting military budgets which would guarantee the efficacy of the Triple Alliance and prevent any war of conquest on the part of Russia or of *revanche* on the part of France? Some German Social Democrats perceived the logic in such reasoning and advised action accordingly. At the Hamburg Congress of 1897, Max Schippel, the reporter of the Reichstag group, said:

We have not approved of the soldiers, but there they are. For our proposals in favor of a militia and the abolition of all standing armies, no majority is available at present or in the near future. This is a fact which is surely disagreeable to us but with which we must reckon. Because the bourgeois parties do not share our opinion in this matter, must we expose the German workingmen, as if for punishment, to the risk of having to pay with their blood for the lack of intelligence of our opponents? Such behavior would be idiotic and absolutely contrary to the interests of the working class.<sup>37</sup>

Replying to critics, Schippel admitted that "the existing government thrives on war" but emphasized the ever-present possibility of war.

If one cannot prevent wars, nevertheless one cannot give our soldiers bad rifles, bad cannon. . . . If the militaristic system drives us to a war which we cannot prevent, if we suffer a defeat, and if the blood of our German proletariat doubly flows, I believe that we shall all be reproached by the government for not having taken the necessary precautions at the right moment.<sup>38</sup>

Though the utterances of Schippel were not well received by the majority of the delegates to the congress, they evoked an eloquent defense from Ignatz Auer, the Bavarian Socialist, who dwelt upon the necessity of adequate military preparedness against Russian "barbarism". And when, in the ensuing electoral campaign, it was felt necessary to disprove accusations of anti-patriotism, several Social Democratic candidates intimated to their constituents a ready willingness to compromise on the old question of militarism and on the new question of navalism. Said Auer at Hanover on February 9, 1898:

We can approve nothing of the government so long as we are not recognized as a factor possessing equal rights in parliamentary and public life. But if the working class is recognized as possessing equal rights, then will the tasks of this class increase and likewise its responsibility; and it is indeed quite possible that from the day on which the workingman perceives himself a factor possessing equal rights we shall allow ourselves to speak on the naval question. Only for the present must we on principle refuse to vote "a single man, a single penny".

<sup>37</sup> *Protokoll des Parteitage* (1897), pp. 121-122.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 137.

On the following day, Wolfgang Heine, candidate at Berlin, expressed his belief that for the present and the immediate future the attitude of the party would be the same as formerly, but he did not perceive in the refusal of military credits a question of principle and thought the time would come when the party might grant them in return for definite political concessions.

*Do ut des.* We give military credits to the Government; the Government thereupon grants us new liberties. . . . The "policy of compensations" has worked advantageously for the Catholic Centre, why not for the Social Democracy?<sup>39</sup>

Was the German Social Democracy, in gaining two million voters, losing its own Marxian soul? A certain group of its adherents hoped so; to them a Lassallean opportunism appeared more substantially spiritual (if the expression may be used) than the dogmas of Marx. They would not repudiate the gospel according to Marx or deny their own Marxian profession of faith made at the Congress of Erfurt; they would simply "interpret" and "revise" the gospel; they would merely apply the principles of private judgment and modernistic reason to the proper understanding of the Erfurt symbol. This tendency, inchoate in the early 'nineties, reached fruition in the influential sect of "Revisionism" largely through the writings of Eduard Bernstein, especially his *Probleme des Sozialismus*, which appeared in serial form in *Die Neue Zeit* in 1896-1897,<sup>40</sup> and his *Voraussetzungen des Sozialismus und die Aufgaben der Sozialdemokratie*, published in book form in 1899. Without pausing to indicate the manifold changes in tactics which Revisionism involved, it may be remarked that the essence of the new movement was the denial of the "catastrophic" doctrine of Marxism.

I confess freely [wrote Bernstein] that I have extremely little feeling for, or interest in, what is commonly spoken of as "the ultimate goal of Socialism". This goal, whatever it may be, is for me absolutely nothing; the movement itself is everything. And I mean by the movement as much the general movement of society, that is, social progress,

<sup>39</sup> These remarks of Heine and Auer (and much else that is interesting in this connection) were reported to the Hanover Congress. *Protokoll des Parteitages* (1899), p. 250.

<sup>40</sup> There were four of these articles, all in vol. XV., pt. I., of *Die Neue Zeit*: (1) "Allgemeines über Utopismus und Eklektizismus" (October 28, 1896), pp. 164-171; (2) "Eine Theorie der Gebiete und Grenzen des Kollektivismus" (November 4, 1896), pp. 204-213; (3) "Der Gegenwärtige Stand der Industriellen Entwicklung in Deutschland" (November 25, 1896), pp. 303-311; (4) "Die Neuere Entwicklung der Agrarverhältnisse in England" (March 10, 1897), pp. 772-783. Bernstein, it must be remembered, was at this time in England; he did not return to Germany until 1902.

as the political and economic agitation and organization for the purpose of realizing this progress. . . . In securing a good factory law, Socialism can accomplish more than in the public ownership of a whole group of factories.<sup>41</sup>

Bernstein's Revisionism was at once championed by some of the party's ablest publicists, such as Dr. Conrad Schmidt, Dr. Woltmann, and Dr. Eduard David, and by such an astute political leader as Vollmar; and it proved powerfully attractive to the allied trade-unions.<sup>42</sup> Nevertheless it was denounced by Karl Kautsky,<sup>43</sup> the editor of *Die Neue Zeit* and premier theorist of the party, and also by Rosa Luxemburg,<sup>44</sup> the dominating personage in the women's Socialist movement; and, after acrid debates at the Hanover Congress of 1899 and at the Lübeck Congress of 1901, it was formally condemned at the latter congress as a "heresy". For a few years at the opening of the twentieth century it seemed as if the German Social Democracy was reacting strongly against Revisionism. It was the time when the party dallied with the idea of the "general strike" and contended vigorously against the imperialist policies of the government.

The main impetus to the dallying with "direct action" as opposed to orderly parliamentary agitation came from the putative success of the general strike in Russia which wrung from the Tsar the ambiguous constitution of October, 1905. Throughout western Europe there was a new impatience with parliamentary delays, and in Germany the impotence of the Social Democratic members of the Reichstag, in spite of the three million votes behind them, seemed intolerable. Why should not the German Socialists learn a lesson from their Russian comrades and seek to realize their political and economic aims, seek, moreover, to prevent international war, by utilizing the methods of revolutionary syndicalism? So queried Rosa Luxemburg and Liebknecht the Younger. It was the first serious attempt in thirty years to divert and subvert the Socialist movement by an anarchistic agitation from within.<sup>45</sup> And when rumor spread that the German government was concerting measures

<sup>41</sup> "Der Kampf der Sozialdemokratie und die Revolution der Gesellschaft. II. Die Zusammenbruchs-Theorie und die Kolonialpolitik", in *Die Neue Zeit*, vol. XVI., pt. I., p. 556, January 19, 1898.

<sup>42</sup> It is not without significance that Revisionism affected Socialist trade-unionism in Germany at about the same time as the British trade-unions were being drawn into a political alliance with Socialist groups to form the British "Labor Party", which put its emphasis upon practice rather than upon theory.

<sup>43</sup> *Bernstein und das Sozialdemokratische Programm* (1899).

<sup>44</sup> *Sozialreform oder Revolution?* (1899).

<sup>45</sup> Ensor, *Modern Socialism* (second ed., 1908), introd.

with the Tsar for the suppression of the Russian revolution, the apostles of revolutionary syndicalism temporarily became very influential. The Jena Congress of 1905 endorsed the principle of the general strike "in case of an attack upon universal, equal, direct, and secret suffrage or upon the right of combination".<sup>46</sup> But the German trade-unionists in their congress at Cologne overwhelmingly rejected the principle: they were unwilling to sacrifice their accumulated funds and endanger their own livelihood by bearing the brunt of a struggle which, whatever good it might do the Russian democracy, was not likely to be of considerable immediate service to themselves individually. Under pressure from the trade-unionists, the Socialist Congress at Mannheim in 1906 reopened the question and in the protracted, bitter debate which ensued, August Bebel threw all his prestige and oratorical gifts into the scale on the side of the trade-unionists and other advocates of "moderation" and "parliamentary action".

Very few of you, comrades [said Bebel on that occasion], have experienced a great war. You have no notion of the situation on the outbreak of war in 1870. Of course we have grown much stronger since then, but the forces at the disposal of the anti-Socialists have grown too. [*"Quite right!"*] Above all, the nature of military armament has completely changed. Who believes that at a moment when a violent shock, a fever, is moving the masses to their very depths, when the danger of a gigantic war with its appalling misery confronts us—who believes that at such a moment it is possible to institute a general strike? [*"Quite right!"*] The idea is childish. From the first day of such a war there march under arms in Germany five million men including many hundreds of thousands of our party comrades. The entire nation is in arms. Frightful want, universal unemployment, starvation, stoppage of factories, fall of paper securities—is it credible that at such a moment when each is thinking only of himself, one could institute a general strike? [*"Very good!"*] If any leaders of the party were so senseless as to institute a general strike on such a day, martial law would at once be extended, along with the mobilization, over the whole of Germany, and decisions would then pass from the civil courts to the courts martial. I have often heard it said—and I think it probable because in governmental circles it is supposed that the Social Democrats could be crazy enough to take such a course—I have often heard it said that exalted persons have long nursed the idea of preparing the same fate for all the leaders of the Social Democracy as was meted out in 1870 to the members of our party executive. If you think that in such a case our adversaries will exercise any clemency, you are mistaken; I think it inconceivable that in any such case any should be expected. Things are different with us from things in other countries. Germany is a kind of state like unto no other. That may

<sup>46</sup> *Handbuch der Sozialdemokratischen Parteitage von 1863-1909* (ed. Wilhelm Schröder, 1910), p. 306.

be taken as a compliment, but it is the truth; and this truth we must keep in sight, and direct our affairs accordingly. [*"Quite right!"*]<sup>47</sup>

Bebel and the trade-unionists carried the day at Mannheim;<sup>48</sup> and at the international congresses of 1907, 1910, and 1912, the majority of the German delegates renewed their opposition to the general strike.<sup>49</sup>

Parallel with the debates in the Socialist congresses on the practicability of the general strike, went debates in the Reichstag and in the press on the changed tendencies of German foreign policy: the new imperialism and "world power", and the rapid increase of military and naval armaments. Into these debates the Social Democrats entered with enthusiasm and unanimity, denouncing the Chinese expedition of 1900, the Bagdad railway concessions, the spectacular entry of the Kaiser into the Moroccan imbroglio in 1905, the outrages committed by German soldiers in suppressing the Southwest African revolt in 1905-1906, and the constant threats of armed force with which the emperor and Chancellor von Bülow sought to widen the sphere of Germany's participation in world politics and in economic exploitation.<sup>50</sup> It was because the Socialist group in the Reichstag made common cause with the Centrists in 1906 in refusing appropriations deemed necessary for the suppression of the African revolt, that the government dissolved the lower house and decreed the fateful elections of January, 1907. The decisive nature of the impending elections was clearly stated in the electoral address of the Social Democrats:

You have now to choose new deputies at the polls, in accordance with your opinions, not merely upon the position in Southwest Africa, but upon our entire policy at home and abroad. The situation is serious, very serious. After a thirty-five years' existence the German Empire finds itself in almost complete isolation. For the last fifteen years there has been no lack of speeches and trips made in many potentates' countries, no lack of presents made to the most diverse nations. But the result of all these unsought assurances of love and affection is that to-day German policy is regarded with distrust by almost every foreigner, and Germany instead of friends has scarcely any but covert or overt enemies. Consequently, the world-situation is such that despite all the peace-loving assurances which ruling sovereigns give on occasion after occasion, armaments by land and sea are

<sup>47</sup> *Protokoll des Parteitages* (1906), pp. 240-241; cf. Ensor, *Modern Socialism* (second ed., 1908), p. 195.

<sup>48</sup> The Mannheim Resolution was worded as a compromise; in effect it was a defeat for Rosa Luxemburg and her party. Cf. Wilhelm Schröder, *op. cit.*, p. 310.

<sup>49</sup> Walling, *The Socialists and the War* (1915), pp. 30-49.

<sup>50</sup> See Parvus, *Die Kolonialpolitik und der Zusammenbruch* (1907), and Gustav Noske, *Kolonialpolitik und Sozialdemokratie* (1914).

continually reinforced, the debts of nations and their loads of taxes are continually mounting up, and a feeling of anxiety, as at the advent of an immense catastrophe, continually strengthens its hold on the civilized peoples and forbids them peacefully enjoying the fruits of their labor. . . . [Instead of arbitration and disarmament] we see the ruling classes and their solution, "If you want peace, you must be armed for war", with which they carry on their policy of embittering nations in order to maintain their own class-rule in domestic affairs. The military and naval armaments serve to enrich them. Besides, they cherish the thought on the sly that nations kept in constant anxiety about a grasping and warlike neighbor do not apply themselves to improve their social conditions as they otherwise could and would. This policy of international ruin, in which Germany to-day sets the pace, we have hitherto most decidedly opposed, and we shall continue to oppose it.<sup>51</sup>

Again the government invoked the red demon of revolutionary and traitorous Socialism; again Conservatives and National Liberals, "patriots" of every stamp, rallied in defense of family, morality, country, Kaiser, and God, and incidentally of a very vigorous foreign and world policy; and again when the votes were counted it was discovered that the Social Democrats had suffered a signal defeat. True, the Social Democrats had gained 248,200 popular votes over their number in the general election of 1903, but their representation in the Reichstag, thanks to the adroitness of Bülow<sup>52</sup> and the co-operation of the various bourgeois parties, had been cut from eighty-one to forty-three.<sup>53</sup>

The national verdict of 1907 had a most sobering and moderating effect upon the German Social Democracy. The party, which for all practical purposes had repudiated the general strike, now found the realization of its one remaining hope—majority control of the Reichstag—further off than at any time since 1890. This sad discovery dampened the ardor of extreme Marxists and galvanized the Revisionists into greater activity. Without moving for the withdrawal of the ban promulgated against them at Lübeck in 1901, the Revisionists now slowly but surely communicated much of their "heresy" to the entire party. A much larger delegation in the Reichstag must be obtained. For this purpose a phenomenal increase in the succeeding popular elections must be secured. To this end the party must not alienate well-organized trade-unionists

<sup>51</sup> Signed by seventy-eight Social Democratic deputies in the Reichstag and published in *Vorwärts*, December 16, 1906. Translation in Ensor, *Modern Socialism*, pp. 370-371.

<sup>52</sup> Prince von Bülow in his *Imperial Germany* gives a naïvely candid account of his remarkable activities and manoeuvres in the epochal elections of 1907.

<sup>53</sup> For an admirable explanation of the elections from the standpoint of the leading Revisionist, see Bernstein, "The German Elections and the Social Democrats", in the *Contemporary Review*, XCI. 479-492 (April, 1907).



or enlightened middle-class sympathizers. Accordingly, cataclysms and other disquieting bits of the Marxian system must be pushed into the background; a too unpatriotic attitude eschewed; and the party, in pursuit of all-important votes, must hold to practical exigencies—educational reform, extension of the right of association, direct and progressive taxation, universal direct suffrage extended to Prussia as it already existed for the empire, reduction of the hours of labor, increase of wages, protection against oppressive factory regulations. Though the Social Democrats both in the Reichstag and in their congresses continued to support arbitration and disarmament and to criticize the government for what they called its dangerous foreign policies,<sup>54</sup> nevertheless there could be little doubt that from 1907 to 1914 the tide was running ever stronger toward moderation and compromise.

In the matter of imperialism—so significant in the elections of 1907—there was noticeable shifting. The historic attitude of the Marxian Socialists had been expressed at the International Congress of London in 1896 in a resolution declaring that "Whatever may be the pretext of colonial politics, whether it be religion, or the advancement of civilization, it is in reality nothing but the extension of the field of capitalistic exploitation in the exclusive interest of the capitalist class". Now, at the International Congress of Stuttgart in 1907, most of the Socialists of nations possessing colonies voted to modify the policy; and of the Germans, Karl Kautsky and Georg Ledebour wished to reaffirm the London Resolution, but Eduard Bernstein and Eduard David, supported by the trade-union leaders, were anxious to discard it.

The increasing toleration of imperialism was after all but a natural corollary to earlier Revisionist influence upon the question of "protectionism *versus* free trade". At the German Congress of Stuttgart in 1898, Kautsky had insisted that free trade is a Socialist "principle", but Max Schippel, ably seconded by Vollmar and Wolfgang Heine, had held it to be a mere matter of "tactics"; the resolution adopted at that time was Kautsky's with an important qualifying amendment introduced by Bebel in order to conciliate the Revisionists: free trade was indeed a "principle", but "eventualities might arise in which it would be legitimate to accord some

<sup>54</sup> There is an illuminating résumé of these endeavors of the Social Democrats in the *Bericht der Reichstagsfraktion* in the *Protokoll des Parteitag* (1911), pp. 129-133, and in the *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, XII. Legislaturperiode, II. Session, Band 266, *Stenographische Berichte*, 159. Sitzung am 30. März 1911, especially the speeches by Scheidemann, Frank (Mannheim), and David.

measure of protection". Ambiguities were deemed preferable to party splits. Even "principles" must not be exalted above the requirements of vote-getting.

So chastening was the effect of the elections of 1907 upon the German Social Democracy that Bebel himself became something of a champion of the government in spite of its high-handed methods of combating his party. On the very morrow of the elections Bebel declared at the International Congress of Stuttgart that

affairs are no longer in such shape that the threads of a war catastrophe are hidden to educated and observing students of politics. Closet diplomacy has ceased to be. . . . The war party, to be sure, is small with us Germans and has no adherents in governmental circles. . . . In the ruling classes of Germany nobody wants war, partly out of regard for the existence of the Socialist movement. Prince Bülow himself conceded to me that the authorities know what great dangers for government and society lie in a European war, and therefore would avoid it if possible.<sup>55</sup>

Another effect of the elections of 1907 upon the German Social Democracy was to settle beyond doubt the much-mooted question of co-operation with bourgeois parties in electoral campaigns. Bernstein had advocated such a policy as early as 1893,<sup>56</sup> but it had been condemned by the Cologne Congress in that year. It had been debated, with special reference to the curious three-class electoral system in Prussia, at the Hamburg Congress of 1897 and at the Stuttgart Congress of 1898, but without decisive results. At the Hanover Congress of 1899, largely under Revisionist influence, the following resolution was adopted:

In order to reach its goal, the party utilizes every means which, in harmony with its fundamental principles, promises it success. Without entertaining any illusions concerning the character and methods of bourgeois parties, representatives and defenders of the existing political and social order, it does not refuse in a given instance to co-operate with certain of them whenever it is a question of strengthening the party at elections, of extending the political rights and liberties of the people, of ameliorating in a serious way the social condition of the working class, of favoring the accomplishment of the duties of civilization, or of combating projects hostile to the working class and the people. But the party guards above all, in its activity, its complete autonomy and independence and considers each success which it achieves only as a step which brings it nearer its ultimate goal.<sup>57</sup>

Next year the Mainz Congress applied this general principle specifically to the impending Prussian elections:

<sup>55</sup> Walling, *The Socialists and the War*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>56</sup> *Die Neue Zeit*, vol. XI., pt. II., pp. 772-778 (1892-1893).

<sup>57</sup> *Protokoll des Parteitage* (1899), p. 67.

In all the German states in which exists the three-class electoral system, the members of the party are bound at the next elections to take part in the campaign with their secondary electors. For the elections to the Prussian Landtag the party executive forms the central electoral committee, and without its approval the members of the party in the several electoral districts must make no coalitions with bourgeois parties.<sup>58</sup>

Relatively slight use was made of these formal authorizations while the Marxists seemingly had the upper hand, from 1901 to 1907, but the great success of the coalitions effected by other parties against the Social Democrats in 1907 was a lesson to be taken to heart by the defeated party.

Under these circumstances came the general elections of 1912. This time the Social Democrats were quite restrained in denunciation of imperialism, militarism, and foreign policies; they confined their efforts to attacks upon the unpopular Finance Act of 1909; and, in order to break the "Blue-Black Block", their party executive made arrangements to co-operate on the second balloting with the *Fortschrittliche Volkspartei*. The latter promised to support the former in thirty-one constituencies, and the former were to reciprocate in sixteen constituencies. By this means, the party executive estimated that it gained at least sixteen deputies more than it otherwise would have had.<sup>59</sup> The total gains of the German Social Democracy in 1912 went far to remove the stigma of the 1907 defeat and to justify the "moderate" tactics which of late the party had been following, for its popular vote increased from 3,259,000 to 4,250,300, and its representation in the Reichstag from 43 to 110.<sup>60</sup>

Only a few facts and impressions concerning the German Social Democracy after 1912 need now detain us. The "victory" of 1912 was a victory less of Marxian doctrines throughout Germany than of Revisionist, opportunist tactics within the Social Democratic party. The number of Socialist votes polled in the empire was indeed four and a quarter millions; yet the number of regularly enrolled members of the party—presumably the *bona fide* proletarians—was but 970,112, and of this number over 130,000 were women<sup>61</sup> and perhaps as many more were males under the voting age of 25. And of the enrolled members, a majority were trade-

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.* (1900), p. 241.

<sup>59</sup> *Bericht des Parteivorstandes an den Parteitag zu Chemnitz 1912 in Protokoll*, pp. 29-31.

<sup>60</sup> For electoral statistics, 1871-1912, see Cl. v. Stumpf-Brentano, *Ravenssteins Reichstags-Wahlkarte des Deutschen Reichs* (1912).

<sup>61</sup> *Bericht des Parteivorstandes an den Parteitag zu Chemnitz 1912*. At the Jena Congress of 1913, the number of members was reported as 982,850, including 141,115 women.

unionists, far more Lassallean than Marxist in general outlook, while their Reichstag representatives, frantically endeavoring to bridge the wide gulf between the voting-strength and the membership-strength of the party, were ever veering toward opportunist tactics.

At the very first session of the newly-elected Reichstag, the Marxist wing fell back almost pathetically but quite naturally upon fatalism and abhorrence of violence. As Ledebour expressed it:

All Social Democrats know that Socialism must come as a result of historical necessity, as an inevitable result of economic development. . . . But I warn you, do not have recourse to force! You would thereby but invoke a terrible penalty for yourselves and the whole capitalistic society.<sup>62</sup>

And Hugo Haase, on whom the mantle of Bebel was about to fall, quoted Lassalle's dicta against violent revolutions, and endorsed Kautsky's statements:

If I speak of war as a means of revolution, that does not say that I desire war. Its horrors are so terrible that to-day it is only military fanatics whose ghastly courage could lead them to demand a war in cold blood. But even when revolution is not a means to an end, but an end in itself, which even at the most bloody price could not be too dearly purchased, still one cannot desire war as a means of unshackling revolution.<sup>63</sup>

To the rising anti-Russian feeling which was now gradually over-spreading all Germany, the Social Democrats, in consonance with their traditions and principles, could contribute, and in its popularity they could share. In 1912 they talked much about the need of a *rapprochement* between Germany on the one side and France and Great Britain on the other in order to curb the ambitions of "Tsarism and Russian barbarism". For example, Eduard David, speaking in the Reichstag on foreign policy, after qualifying his praise of the Triple Alliance by the statement that "if perchance Austria should attack Serbia and Russia should hasten to Serbia's assistance, we should not be bound by the engagements of the Alliance to take up arms", went on to say that "the division of the Western European powers had led to the situation where Russia could reach out unhindered in all directions for new masses of land and likewise could assume a most threatening attitude in the Balkan question".<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, XIII. Legislaturperiode, I. Session, Band 286, *Stenographische Berichte*, 75. Sitzung am 2. Dezember 1912, p. 2483.

<sup>63</sup> Quoted from Kautsky's *Die Soziale Revolution*, p. 58, in *Stenographische Berichte*, Band 286, p. 2534.

<sup>64</sup> *Bericht der Reichstagsfraktion an den Parteitag zu Jena 1913.*

It was out of the Balkan conflicts of 1912-1913 and the resulting upset of the balance of power as between Russia and Austria-Hungary, it must be remembered, that the gigantic "preparedness" movement of 1913, common to all Europe, proceeded. Against the German Army Bill of 1913, providing for an increase of 19,000 officers and 117,000 men in the peace establishment, the Social Democrats in the Reichstag voted *en bloc*; but when it came to the question of furnishing funds to render the Army Bill operative, the same Social Democrats discovered "principles" whereby they were enabled for the first time in their history to vote in favor of increased taxes for military purposes.<sup>65</sup> The "principles" were discoverable in the fact that the government proposed to raise the required funds mainly by direct progressive taxation of the rich.<sup>66</sup> In effect, the party was inverting the old maxim and proclaiming that "the means justify the end".

The "tactics" of the Reichstag group were exposed to the Jena Congress of 1913:

The existing situation in the Reichstag forced us to vote in favor of these laws. Even if by chance the special levy should be passed without our votes, it would hardly be so with the property-tax law. In fact it is highly probable that the Conservatives, the Poles, and a part of the Centrists would vote against the property tax, which would mean its defeat. Then there would be two possibilities: either the dissolution of the Reichstag, or the postponement of the question of taxation until autumn. To be sure, every one of us would gladly [!] go to the country for election to a new Reichstag. But we should enter the campaign under very unfavorable conditions. We should be rightly accused of having defeated national direct taxes although we had always demanded them. It is likely that the group would suffer a noteworthy shrinkage,—an eventuality which could not be risked in view of the approaching revision of the tariff.<sup>67</sup>

The caucus of the Reichstag group had adopted this view by a vote of 52 to 37, with seven abstentions; and at the congress it was endorsed by a vote of 336 to 140, the majority including Bernstein,

<sup>65</sup> The question of voting *any* budget proposed by a non-Socialist government had long been a mooted one with the German Social Democrats. Acceptance of such budgets had been advocated particularly by Vollmar and Anton Fendrich ("Zur Frage der Budgetbewilligung" in *Sozialistische Monatshefte*, vol. V., pt. II., pp. 649-661, September, 1901), and opposed by Bebel and Rosa Luxemburg ("Die Badische Budgetabstimmung" in *Die Neue Zeit*, vol. XIX., pt. II., pp. 14-20, April 6, 1901), and debated in the congresses of 1894 and 1901. At Lübeck in 1901 it was resolved to vote against budgets in order to express "lack of confidence", but to admit of occasional exceptions.

<sup>66</sup> See the apology of Hermann Wendel, a Socialist deputy for Saxony in the Reichstag, in the *New Review*, I. 765-771 (1913).

<sup>67</sup> *Bericht der Reichstagsfraktion an den Parteitag zu Jena 1913 in Protokoll*, pp. 169-170.

David, Frank, Göhre, Liebknecht, Scheidemann, Südekum, Weill, and Wendel, and the minority counting Geyer, Ledebour, Rosa Luxemburg, Stadthagen, and Klara Zetkin.<sup>68</sup>

The German Social Democrats, especially the radical minority, did their best to convince their foreign comrades that the action of the Jena Congress in approving the stand of the Reichstag group on the question of the military budget could not be construed as an endorsement of militarism. Karl Liebknecht's celebrated Krupp "revelations" of 1913 were continued and enlarged in May, 1914. The "Zabern affair" was repeatedly exploited in the Reichstag,<sup>69</sup> Wendel going so far in May, 1914, as to conclude a speech with the words, *Vive la France*. Similarly exploited was the prosecution of Rosa Luxemburg on the charge of libelling the army.<sup>70</sup> And when the Great War actually threatened, *Vorwärts* fairly fulminated against the impending disaster. In an extra edition published on July 25, 1914, a proclamation of the party executive in bold black-faced type denounced "Austrian imperialism bringing death and destruction to all Europe". "However much we condemn the deeds of the Pan-Serb nationalists", it went on to say,

*the frivolous war-provocation of the Austro-Hungarian government demands at any rate our sharpest protest. . . . No drop of blood of a single German soldier may be sacrificed to the ambition of an Austrian potentate in the interest of imperialistic gains. . . . The governing classes who in peace gag, despise, and exploit you, will use you as cannon-fodder. Everywhere must sound in the ears of the potentates: We wish no war! Down with war! Long live the international brotherhood of the peoples!*

In the din of the clash of arms, the voice of protest, of "international brotherhood", was swiftly silenced. Indeed the party executive hardly awaited the outbreak of war to sound a different note in another proclamation in *Vorwärts*.<sup>71</sup>

The frightful self-slaughter of the European nations is the cruellest confirmation of what we have long but vainly declared. . . . Yet not with fatalistic indifference shall we live through the coming events. We shall remain true to our cause, we shall hold firmly together, inspired by the greatness of our cultural mission. . . . The strenuous prohibitions of martial law affect with fearful force the workingmen's movement. Indiscretions, needless and foolish sacrifices, may disgrace at this moment not only the individual but likewise our cause.

<sup>68</sup> *Protokoll* (1913), pp. 171, 515-516.

<sup>69</sup> See the *Stenographische Berichte* of the sittings of November 28 and December 3-4, 1913, January 23-24, and May 14-15, 1914.

<sup>70</sup> This was just on the eve of the outbreak of the war. She was finally found guilty and sentenced to one year's imprisonment, beginning in March, 1915. See Walling, *The Socialists and the War* (1915).

<sup>71</sup> *Vorwärts*, August 1, 1914.

Then came, on August fourth, the voting of the first war loan by the Reichstag. From what has already been indicated of the Socialist movement in Germany, no surprise should be evoked by the fact that the Social Democratic group voted "aye", nor by the statement which Chairman Haase read to the Reichstag in justification of the patriotism of his party:

Now we are only too surely confronted by the fact that war is upon us and that we are menaced by the terror of foreign invasion. The problem before us now is not the relative advisability of war or peace, but a consideration of just what steps must be taken for the protection of our country. . . . As far as our people and their independence are concerned, much, if not everything, would be endangered by a triumph of autocratic Russia, already weltering in the blood of her own noblest sons. It devolves upon us, therefore, to avert this danger, to defend the civilization and independence of our native land. Therefore we must to-day justify what we have always said. In its hour of danger Germany may ever rely upon us.<sup>72</sup>

Into the subsequent developments of German Social Democracy it is impossible to go with any degree of assurance. It seemed by 1917 as if the party was hopelessly split. One little group, headed by Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, had maintained continuous and consistent opposition to the war, but Liebknecht in voting "no" on the second war loan (December 2, 1914) had committed a breach of party discipline and had accordingly been reprimanded by a vote of sixty-five to twenty-six; and this "willful" group had been pretty effectually silenced by the thickness of prison walls. A larger group—the so-called "Minority Socialists"—supported the government so long as the war was obviously defensive against Russia, but as soon as it appeared to them to be waged primarily against England and France, and for conquest, they refused further credits in the Reichstag and became apostles of peace in the country: this group, though it included some of the most eminent Socialists in Germany, such as the great theorist Kautsky, the Revisionist leader Bernstein,<sup>73</sup> Haase, the successor of Bebel, Franz Mehring, the historian of the party, and Ledebour, was unable to control more than a fifth of the Socialist members of the Reichstag; claiming to be the true custodians of the gospel according to Marx and of the epistles of Lassalle, its members at length in 1916 broke with the Social Democratic Party and formed

<sup>72</sup> Walling, *The Socialists and the War*, pp. 143-144; cf. La Chesnais, *Le Groupe Socialiste du Reichstag et la Déclaration de Guerre* (1915).

<sup>73</sup> Bernstein was the only Revisionist of note who joined the "Minority Socialists". His attitude was no doubt determined in large part by his great admiration for England.

a rival organization. The secession of the "Minority Socialists" left the Opportunists and Revisionists in complete control of the party, which was now "pro-war" and undoubtedly "patriotic".

As early as August 21, 1914, Philipp Scheidemann expressed the view which was to dominate the Majority Socialists, of whom he was to become the leader.

When France, republican France, [he wrote] has allied herself with Russian autocracy for the purpose of murder and destruction, it is difficult to conceive that England, parliamentary England, democratic England, is fighting side by side with them for "liberty and civilization". That is truly a gigantic, shameless piece of hypocrisy. . . . The motive of England is envy of our economic development. . . . Russia, France, Belgium, England, Serbia, Montenegro, and Japan in the struggle for liberty and civilization against Germanism, which has given to the world Goethe, Kant, and Karl Marx! This would be a joke if the situation were not so desperately serious.<sup>74</sup>

It is truly illuminating to turn over the pages of the *Socialistische Monatshefte* and to behold article after article of the most patriotic import from the pens of Max Schippel,<sup>75</sup> Eduard David, Wolfgang Heine,<sup>76</sup> Edmund Fischer, Paul Hirsch, and Ludwig Quessel.<sup>77</sup> England is damned, and the Socialists who die on the battle-field are raised to the altars.

On the probable domestic policies of the re-baptized Social Democratic Party, some light is perhaps shed by a remarkable speech delivered by Wolfgang Heine at Stuttgart on February 22, 1915. After arguing against peace and in support of the government not only in the prosecution of the war but also in the securing of "permanent territorial guarantees", the deputy extolled imperialism as an essential part of normal national development and indicated that the workingman's chief aim of the future must be to strive by means of a simple labor party gradually to realize political and social reforms.<sup>78</sup>

In bringing to a close this review of developments in German Social Democracy between 1848 and 1915, I am oppressed by the

<sup>74</sup> Letter written August 21, 1914, and published in the New York *Volkszeitung*, September 10, 1914.

<sup>75</sup> See particularly his *Englands Wirtschaftliche Kriegführung*, November 11, 1914, pp. 1170-1176.

<sup>76</sup> See particularly his *Deutsche Sozialdemokratie im Deutschen Volk*, July 8, 1915, pp. 628-636.

<sup>77</sup> See particularly his *Britische Annexionspläne*, September 9, 1915, pp. 867-872.

<sup>78</sup> The speech of Heine is to be found in great part in *Vorwärts*, February 25, 1915. It is synchronized with the conclusion of the nine-day battle of the Mazurian lakes.



feeling that I have not done justice to the movement. Too much has been said about its international policies and its merely tactical manoeuvres in German politics, and too little about its greatest and best contributions to the Germany of the present and of the future. Quite aside from its failures to establish a Marxian society and order in the Fatherland and to usher in a universal brotherhood of the world's workingmen, it has done more than any other single factor—more, it may be said without exaggeration, than all other factors put together—to preserve to twentieth-century Germany the heritage of the days of 1848, a passionate longing for political democracy, for individual liberties, for social equality. To this, its four-and-a-quarter million electoral followers are an eloquent testimony. To-day political Germany as a whole is a thinly disguised military despotism, and the Reichstag, the popular assembly, is not much more efficacious than any respectable debating society. But outside the *form* of German political life are two million workingmen, including three-fourths of the trade-unionists of the country, who have had an excellent training, through their local organization, their annual congresses, and their press, in the methods and procedure, in the problems and responsibilities, of democratic self-government; and for this training they—and the friends of democracy throughout the world—have the German Social Democracy to thank.

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